

[Edna Lutz]

August 25, 1939

Edna Lutz ([Negress?])

Newton, N. C.

Ethel Deal, Writer

Dudley [V.?] Crawford, Reviser Original Names Changed Names

Edna Lutz Eva Klutz

Joe Lutz Henry Klutz

Madison County [Maiden?] County

Estus Icard [Loma Hines?]

Phillip Lutz Onex Klutz

Cora Lutz Connie Klutz

Henry Rastus C 9 — N. C. [?]

“Howdy, come in; take that chair over there. I ain't feeling so good.' Eva Klutz sighed as she seated herself in the only other chair in the room.

“What's the trouble, Eva? Henry on the gang again?”

“No, as it happens, he ain't, but there's where he ought to be. Here I got three of his younguns to support and him off livin' wid another woman. I ain't seed him in a long time

Library of Congress

and I hopes I don't ever see him again. No, I'se worried about my work. I works in the lunch room when school is [going?] on, and this summer I been on the garden project, but I been laid off for thirty days. I'm scared I can't get back on. Me and the younguns gets [along?] purty good when I gets work. Henry never did [help?] none; all he did was lay ? round and eat up what I made.

"I got to stir my beans, [?] Eva said, and shuffled across the sagging floor toward the lean-to kitchen, followed by the three children.

"If I was you, Eva , I'd divorce Henry and get me a man that would work."

"What'm I gonna divorce him with, my fist? I got no money. It takes all I got to live. I owe four dollars rent now. 'Sides my 'ligion is against it. I's a methodist, I belong to the M.E. Zion Church. My mammy raised us up to be good and obey the Bible. I tries mighty hard to do it.

2

But that trifling nigger tries my patience.

"I's born in Maiden County and raised on the farm. I'm twenty nine years old. I'd rather live on a farm if I could make a living. I been living here most ever since I been married. I like it here; it's close to the church and school too. I went as far as the ninth grade myself. If I have good luck and can work I want my children to go further than that. I usta have to go out and work by the day 'fore this W.P.A. come along. I like it only I made such a little, fifty cents for a big washing. That means a day's work for me. Time I gets up and tends to my children, gets breakfast, and walks to town, it pushes me to put up a big washing, and get home by four o'clock. Some people say that if President Roosevelt goes out, the W.P.A. work will stop. I don't know if that's so or not. If it is I guess we'll all starve. There just ain't enough work to go 'round." Eva was a picture of woe as she sat, chin resting in her cupped

Library of Congress

hand. The blue uniform she wore was dirty, her shoes were untied and run over at the heels.

There was a rap at the door and Eva said, "Come in," without moving. A tall neat looking negress of about forty entered.

3

"I brought you over a little salad," the visitor said, as she handed Eva a plate covered with a paper napkin. Loma Hines was a well-shaped woman, wore a freshly laundered print dress, and had her hair done up in little rolls all over her head. "I can't stay but a minute," she said, "I'm busy this time of the year. What with the canning, cooking, washing and ironing, it keeps me on the go. Are you coming over to the church tonight, Eva?"

"Oh, I don't know, I might and then I mightn't."

"We're going to have a big meeting at our church," Loma explained to me. "I'm going to have the preachers for supper; got my chickens all dressed and my cake baked. I hope you will come, Eva." Loma, the picture of health and happiness, departed; while Eva slumped again.

I reminded her that she was rid of Henry, had good health, and would probably get her job back. "Dat's so," she said, and stood up.

"I guess the best thing to do is just forget everything. I got lots of work to do around here, guess I'll get at it and get it done. When my job opens up again I'll be ready for it. I ain't done with that story though. Like I told you, my mammy raised us up to do right. She made us go to preaching and sunday school. Guess I ain't been doing it. That trifling man of mine has just aggravated 4 me so I ain't cared for nothing. I see now I got lots of blessings. I ain't cared how this old house looks. I's gonna clean it up and make a new start. Hey there Onex, where you at?"

Library of Congress

A little ragged boy appeared from the kitchen lickin' his fingers. "Onex, what you been up to? You been tasting that salad?" Onex hung his head. "Stir yourself, you and Connie get me a tub of water. I'm going to heat it and get to work."

The two children went out. "And you Rastus, I'm going to [give?] you a job pulling up weeds. We're gonna clean up this whole place. Tonight we will all go to preaching." Eva's whole appearance had changed. The look of woe had left her face. In its [place?] was one of determination, as she and the children lost themselves in their work.